तव कथामृतं तप्तजीवनम्
tava kathāmṛtaṁ tapta-jīvanam

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Eternal Associates in the Material World

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

To answer your second question, you should know that Arjuna and Kunti Devi are not in Krishnaloka. They are eternally associated with Krishna only in the material world. Just like Krishna is always in the spiritual world, so similarly he is always in the material world and his pastimes are going on there also. In the material world, Krishna also has eternal associates such as Arjuna and Kunti Devi. There is a difference between the body and soul of Arjuna and Kunti Devi, but although Arjuna is with Krishna in innumerable different material universes at one time, still there is only one spirit soul who is Arjuna. This spirit soul expands into many different bodies and thus you can understand that there are also incarnations of devotees as well as incarnations of Krishna. This is the unlimited power of the spirit soul. Such conception cannot be understood while one is still in the conditioned state. ❀

— Letter to Saradiya. 12 December 1968.

Haridas Thakur and the Muslim King

Adapted from Srila Vrindavan Das Thakur's Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata* ādi *16.18-71

The eternal associate of the Lord, Haridas Thakur, appeared in a Mohammedan family in the village of Budhan, East Bengal. Due to

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his mercy, that province is filled with *kīrtana* even today. After residing there for some time, he shifted to the bank of the Ganga at Phuliya, near Santipur.

Haridas was completely renounced from material enjoyment and his mouth was always beautified with the chanting of Krishna's names. He did not give up chanting the names of Govinda for even a moment, and as a result he was constantly manifesting various ecstatic symptoms. Sometimes he danced alone and sometimes he roared like a mad lion. Sometimes he cried loudly and sometimes he laughed loudly. He manifested all the different ecstatic symptoms like crying, hairs standing on end, laughing, losing consciousness, and perspiring. Haridas' entire body became wet as tears of love flowed from his eyes. Even staunch atheists would offer him respect.

Once the local Kazi went to his respected superior, the king of Bengal, and complained about Haridas. "Haridas is a Muslim, but he follows the religion of the Hindus. Please call him and consider his case."

Hearing the words of the sinful Kazi, the sinful king immediately ordered that Haridas be arrested without delay. Haridas was not even afraid of death personified, what to speak of the Muslim rulers. As he was brought to the court of the king, Haridas chanted the name of Krishna. Hearing about Haridas' arrest, pious persons felt morose.

In the king's prison were some respectable persons. When they heard that Haridas had been put in prison with them they became pleased at heart. "Haridas is a great *vaiṣṇava*. By seeing

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him our distress will be vanquished." The prisoners persuaded the guards to let them see Haridas. When Thakur Haridas saw the prisoners, he glanced mercifully upon them. Seeing the lotus feet of Haridas Thakur, all the prisoners devotedly offered obeisances to him and ecstatic devotional symptoms manifest in their bodies. When Haridas saw the prisoners' devotion, he mercifully smiled at them and gave them an ambiguous blessing: *thāka thāka, ekhana āchaha yena-rūpe* — "Stay, stay as you are now."

Unable to understand his equivocal words, the prisoners felt some sadness. Haridas then mercifully explained: "You have not understood the meaning of the blessings I gave, and therefore you are lamenting. I never award inauspicious benedictions. Carefully try to understand. As your minds are presently fixed on Krishna, let them stay that way forever. Your present state of mind is auspicious for you because you have received the opportunity to cultivate Krishna consciousness by giving up endeavors for material enjoyment. Therefore, always remain engaged in chanting Krishna's names and in remembering Krishna. Here you have no envy or trouble from others, so you can humbly chant and think of Krishna. If you again return to material enjoyment, by bad association you'll forget everything about Krishna. One cannot achieve love for Krishna as long as he is engaged in sense gratification. You should know for certain that Krishna is far away from such persons. The mind that is absorbed in material enjoyment is a great disturbance. Attachment for wife and children are the binding ropes of illusion that lead one to death. The nature of material enjoyment is that one makes the same mistake again and again. Therefore I did not mean 'Stay there in prison,' but rather, 'Stay free from thoughts of material enjoyment and always chant the name of Hari.' Do not even slightly lament that I gave you this blessing in an ambiguous way. I glance mercifully on all living entities. May you all have firm devotion for Lord Krishna. Don't worry. I guarantee that within two or three days you will be freed. After offering the prisoners his best wishes, Haridas went before the king.

Seeing Haridas' brilliant effulgence, the king respectfully offered him a seat and said, "My dear brother, how have you become so degraded? There is no birth superior to one in a Muslim family. Why have you accepted the behavior of the inferior Hindus? We don't even eat rice touched by the Hindus because they are low-class. How will you be delivered after death if you transgress the Mohammedan religious principles and follow other religious principles? Give up such sinful behavior and recite the Koran. Then you will be freed from the sin incurred by following the Hindu religion.

After hearing the king, Haridas laughed and said, "How wonderfully the illusory energy acts!" He then sweetly said to the king, "Listen, dear sir. The Supreme Lord of all is one without a second. The Hindus and Muslims differentiate the Lord only by name, but in spiritual vision the Lord is one. This is confirmed in the *Purāṇas* and the Koran. The Supreme Lord sits in everyone's heart and accepts their devotion. I am only acting under the inspiration of the Supreme Lord. By his own desire, a Hindu *brāhmaṇa* may also become a Muslim. What can the Hindus do? That is his karma. Dear sir, now you can judge. If I'm at fault then you may punish me."

Hearing Haridas' conclusive statements, the Muslims were all satisfied. Only the sinful Kazi instigated the king, saying, "Punish him. This miscreant will create other miscreants, and he'll bring a bad name to the Muslim community. Therefore punish him in an exemplary way, as a warning to others so that this may not happen again. Or at least make him recite the confession from the Koran."

The king again requested Haridas, "O brother, just recite the confession from the Koran and you'll have nothing to worry. Otherwise the Kazis will punish you and you'll be forced to recite the Koran anyway. In this way you'll be humiliated."

Haridas said, "One cannot do anything other than what the Supreme Lord desires. Know for certain that the Lord awards the results of one's offenses.

khaṇḍa khaṇḍa hai deha yāya yadi prāṇa
tabu āmi vadane nā chāḍi hari-nāma

"Even if my body is cut into pieces and I give up my life, I will never give up chanting the Lord's holy name." (94)

After hearing Haridas' statement, the king asked the Kazi, "Now what will you do with him?"

The Kazi replied, "Take his life by having him beaten in twenty-two marketplaces. If he survives, then we'll understand that his words are true." The Kazi then called the

guards and sternly ordered them, "Beat him in such a way that he will die. If a Muslim who follows the Hindu religion is killed, he will be delivered from that sin.

The miscreant guards then took Haridas from market to market and mercilessly beat him. Haridas simply remembered the name of Krishna, and on account of that ecstatic remembrance he felt no pain. The pious people were greatly distressed to see the excessive beating of Haridas. Someone said, "The entire kingdom will be destroyed because they are torturing such a saintly person." Someone angrily cursed the king and the Kazi, and someone else was prepared to fight them. Another person fell at the feet of the Muslims and said, "I'll give you some money if you don't beat him so hard." Nevertheless the sinful guards showed no mercy, and they continued angrily beating Haridas from market to market.

What to speak of Haridas himself, even one who remembers his activities is immediately relieved of all material miseries. By the mercy of Krishna, Haridas felt no pain whatsoever in spite of such heavy beating. Rather, Haridas felt sorry for the sinful guards who were engaged in beating him, and he prayed, "O Krishna! Be merciful on these living entities! Forgive their offense of torturing me."

In this way, the sinful guards beat Haridas Thakur in the various marketplaces. They beat him severely in order to kill him. But Haridas was not even disturbed by their beating. The Muslims were astonished to see this, and thought, "Can a human being survive after such a beating? "If we beat someone in two or three marketplaces, they die. But we've beaten him in twenty-two marketplaces, still he has not died, and moreover we see that he is smiling! Is he a powerful saint?"

The Muslim servants who had been beating Haridas then said to him, "If we cannot somehow or other beat you to death, our masters will be very angry with us. Then they will kill us out of anger."

Haridas smiled and said, "If my remaining alive creates a problem for you, then I will give up my body right now." After saying this, Haridas entered into deep meditation on Krishna. Endowed with all mystic powers, Haridas then became motionless and his breathing stopped.

Seeing this, the Muslims were struck with wonder. They took his lifeless body before the king. The king ordered them, "Bury him." But the Kazi countered, "Don't do that. If you bury him he will achieve a higher destination. Better you should throw his body into the Ganga. That is a proper punishment for his sinful activities of accepting Hindu religion and chanting the names of the Hindus' God. In this way he will suffer miseries forever."

Following the Kazi's instructions, the guards took Haridas' body to throw in the Ganga. As they were preparing to throw his body in the river, Haridas sat in ecstatic meditation, and Lord Viswambhar entered his body. Suddenly, although the strongest Muslims tried to push Haridas, they found that he was as immovable as a stone pillar. Who had the power to move his body when it had become the abode of Lord Viswambhara? Haridas remained absorbed in the nectarean ocean of love for Krishna and had no external feelings. He did not even know whether he was in the sky, on the land, or in the waters of the Ganga. This is not at all astonishing for Haridas, for Lord Gauracandra constantly resides in his heart. While fighting with the demons, Hanuman protected the prestige of the *brahmāstra* weapon released by Indrajit by apparently allowing its influence upon him. Similarly, Haridas Thakur accepted the beating of the Muslims in order to teach the highest ideal of tolerance to the world. Since Haridas was personally protected by Govinda, how could anyone harm him? What to speak of Haridas himself, even one who remembers his activities is immediately relieved of all material miseries. When the Muslims finally managed to throw Haridas into the river, they were surprised to see his body floating in the Ganga. After some time Haridas regained his external consciousness by the will of the Lord. He then came to the shore and got out of the water in great ecstasy and started for Phuliya while loudly chanting the names of Krishna.

Seeing the extraordinary potency of Haridas, the Muslims' minds changed and they forgot their envy. They considered Haridas a powerful saint and offered him obeisances. Thus they were delivered from material bondage. Sometime after Haridas had regained his external consciousness, the Muslim king came to meet him. Seeing the king, Haridas laughed mercifully. With great awe and reverence, the king folded his hands and humbly said to Haridas. "Now I know for

certain that you are a powerful saint, for you are firmly convinced that the Supreme Lord is one. All the so-called yogis and *jñānīs* simply speak big words, but you have actually attained perfection. O sir, I have personally come to meet you. Please forgive all my offenses. You are freed from arrest. By your own sweet will you may go wherever you like and worship your beloved Lord without disturbance. Though we are most abominable and sinful, please forgive all our unforgivable offenses and glance mercifully on us."

After glancing mercifully on the Muslims, Thakur Haridas entered Phuliya while loudly chanting the names of Hari. He arrived before an assembly of *brāhmaṇas*, who upon seeing Haridas were filled with happiness. The *brāhmaṇas* then began to chant the names of Hari, and Haridas began to dance in ecstasy. Haridas displayed endless ecstatic transformations like crying, shivering, laughing, falling unconscious, standing of the hairs on end, and roaring. In ecstatic love, Haridas crashed to the ground. Seeing this, the *brāhmaṇas* began to float in ecstasy.

After a while, when Haridas became pacified, the *brāhmaṇas* sat around him. Haridas then told them, "Don't feel sorry for me. I have heard blasphemy of the Lord. That is why He has punished me. Whatever happened to me was for my benefit. The Lord has relieved me of my great offense by awarding me a token punishment. ☞

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One who hears blasphemy of Lord Vishnu is sent to the hell known as Kumbhipak, and with my sinful ears I heard so much blasphemy of the Lord. Therefore the Lord has given me an appropriate punishment so that I may not commit such sins in the future."

Haridas and the *brāhmaṇas* then fearlessly enjoyed congregationally chanting the holy names of the Lord.

In the *Skanda Purāṇa* it is stated:

hanti nindati vai dveṣṭi vaiṣṇavān nābhinandati
krudhyate yāti no harṣaṁ darśane patanāni ṣaṭ

Whoever kills or blasphemes a *vaiṣṇava*, whoever is envious of or angry at a *vaiṣṇava*, and whoever does not offer obeisances or feel joy upon seeing a *vaiṣṇava* certainly falls into a hellish condition.

According to this infallible scriptural decree, the Yavanas who had beaten Haridas were soon destroyed along with their families by severe diseases like cholera and smallpox. ❀

— Vrindavan Das Thakur. *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata* with commentary of Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur. English translation by Bhumipati Das. Edited and published by Pundarik Vidyanidhi Das. Vrajaraj Press. Vrindavan. 2001.

THE GLORIES OF SRILA HARIDAS THAKURA

By an unknown medieval Gaudiya Vaishnava

(sung in śrī rāga)

jaya jaya prabhu mora ṭhākura haridāsa
ye karilā harināmera mahimā prakāśa

All glories! All glories to my lord Thakur Haridas, who manifested the greatness of the holy name!

gaurabhakta-gaṇa madhye sarva agragaṇya
yāra guṇa gāi kānde āpane caitanya

Among all the devotees of Gaura, Haridas is the best. Singing the glories of Haridas' character, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu himself cried.

advaita ācārya prabhura prema-sīmā
teṅho se jānena haridāsera mahimā

Adwaita Acharya Prabhu is the last limit of love for Mahaprabhu. He could grasp the depth of the glories of Haridas Thakur.

nityānanda-cāṅda yāre prāṇa hena jāne
caraṇa paraye mahī deha dhanya māne

Haridas Thakur knows the moonlike Nityananda as his life and soul. The touch of the lotus feet of Haridas makes the earth auspicious. ❀

— Translated from *Gaura-pada-taraṅginī*. Jagadbandhu Bhadra (editor). Sri Gauranga Press. Calcutta. 1931. Bengali.